

**To:** Jennifer Catechis[jaconn@msn.com]  
**Cc:** Vela, Austin[Vela.Austin@epa.gov]; Angela Ramirez[angela.ramirez@mail.house.gov]; Stoddard, Andrew[Andrew.Stoddard@mail.house.gov]; Mason, Graham[Graham.Mason@mail.house.gov]; Ben Ray Lujan[benraylujan@me.com]  
**From:** Gray, David  
**Sent:** Fri 8/7/2015 11:24:01 AM  
**Subject:** Re: Inquiry

Hi Jennifer,

Here is an update for you.

Gold King Mine Spill

08/06/2015

Region 6 is coordinating with the State of New Mexico (NMED) and with EPA Region 8 (who has jurisdiction over Colorado) to obtain background samples on the Animas River before the plume enters the State of New Mexico. EPA collected background samples at the first accessible point in New Mexico and near the first drinking water intake in New Mexico.

The plume is traveling at approximately 4 miles per hour. The **estimated** arrival time for the plume at the first drinking water intake in New Mexico (Aztec) is 8:00 PM Mountain Time yesterday.

According to NMED there are seven drinking water intakes on the Animas River, all have been notified. The Town of Aztec, NM closed their water intakes at 6:00 PM (August 5). The Town of Farmington, NM closed their water intakes at 10:30 AM (August 6).

NMED has notified the Navajo Department of Water Resources.

David

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 6, 2015, at 10:52 PM, Jennifer Catechis <[jaconn@msn.com](mailto:jaconn@msn.com)> wrote:

David,

Thank you for the quick response. Is there anything specific being done for the residents of New Mexico? Is there a toll free number that they can call vs. the out of state number?

When does EPA anticipate getting into New Mexico to assess damages and impact? Any idea what kind of assistance will be available to those impacted? Sorry for all the questions but I thought I might get a few of the basics out of the way to start. Again thank you for your timely response.

Jennifer Catechis

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S® 6 edge, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

----- Original message -----

From: "Gray, David" <[gray.david@epa.gov](mailto:gray.david@epa.gov)>

Date: 08/06/2015 9:36 PM (GMT-07:00)

To: Jennifer Catechis <[jaconn@msn.com](mailto:jaconn@msn.com)>, "Vela, Austin" <[Vela.Austin@epa.gov](mailto:Vela.Austin@epa.gov)>, Angela Ramirez <[angela.ramirez@mail.house.gov](mailto:angela.ramirez@mail.house.gov)>, "Stoddard, Andrew"

<[Andrew.Stoddard@mail.house.gov](mailto:Andrew.Stoddard@mail.house.gov)>, "Mason, Graham"

<[Graham.Mason@mail.house.gov](mailto:Graham.Mason@mail.house.gov)>, Ben Ray Lujan <[benraylujan@me.com](mailto:benraylujan@me.com)>

Subject: Inquiry

Hi,

Austin shared your email with me. I am happy to share what I know at this point in time. We have been in close communication with NMED Secretary Flynn and our colleagues in Region 8 where the spill originated. Forgive the typos I am on my iPhone.

David Gray

Director

External and Government Affairs

EPA

214.789.2619 cell

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Flannery O'Neil, MPH

Health Planner and Communications Director

San Juan Basin Health Department  
(970)335-2087  
[www.sjbhd.org](http://www.sjbhd.org)<<http://www.sjbhd.org>><<http://www.sjbhd.org>>

From: Sarah Jacobson [<mailto:Sarah.Jacobson@co.laplata.co.us>]  
Sent: Thursday, August 6, 2015 4:19 PM  
To: [rcorkish@gmail.com](mailto:rcorkish@gmail.com)<<mailto:rcorkish@gmail.com>><<mailto:rcorkish@gmail.com>>;  
Flannery O'Neil <[foneil@sjbhd.org](mailto:foneil@sjbhd.org)<<mailto:foneil@sjbhd.org>><<mailto:foneil@sjbhd.org>>>  
Subject: News Release - Sheriff Order to Close Animas River

Effective Thursday, August 6, 2015 at 3:00 p.m., La Plata County Sheriff Sean Smith issued an order pursuant to CRS [33-13-111](#) and 112, closing the Animas River to all watercraft including canoes, kayaks, tubes, rafts and other flotation devices from the north County line (San Juan County, Colorado) to the south County line (at the Colorado/New Mexico State line) until further notice. Furthermore, all such watercraft must be removed from the Animas River within the locations cited above.

“This decision was made in the interest of public health after consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency, the Colorado Department of Health and Environment, San Juan Basin Health Department and representatives of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe,” advised Sheriff Sean Smith. “This Order shall remain in effect until it is determined that the river is safe. EPA test results of the Animas River are expected within 24-48 hours, and the Order will be re-evaluated at that time.”

The City of Durango and La Plata County Sheriff's Office are posting notices along the Animas River to notify citizens.

A Call Center has been set up for the public at [970-385-8700](tel:970-385-8700). As additional information is received, it will be posted to the La Plata County website at <http://www.co.laplata.co.us/emergency>, San Juan Basin Health Department's Website at [www.sjbhd.org](http://www.sjbhd.org)<<http://www.sjbhd.org>><<http://www.sjbhd.org>>, La Plata County Government Facebook and San Juan Basin Health Department Facebook.

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### **August 6 EPA Statement on Gold King Mine Release**

Yesterday, an EPA team working to investigate and address contamination at the Gold King Mine in San Juan County, Colo. unexpectedly triggered a large release of mine waste water into the upper portions of Cement Creek. Initial estimates are that the release contained approximately 1M gallons of water that was held behind unconsolidated debris near an abandoned mine portal. There were several workers at the site at the time of the breach, all were unharmed.

Following the release, the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment notified water users downstream so they could take appropriate steps to turn off intakes until the contaminated water passes.

The primary environmental concern is the pulse of contaminated water containing sediment and metals flowing as an orange-colored discharge downstream through Cement Creek and into the Animas River. The water associated with the release is obvious and highly discolored. As a precaution, EPA recommends that recreational users of the Animas River avoid contact with or use of the river until the pulse of mine water passes. Over the next several days, EPA teams will be sampling and investigating downstream locations to confirm that the release has passed and poses no additional concerns for aquatic life or water users. EPA will also be assessing damage near the mine portal and any residual releases of water at the mine site.

Sent from my iPhone